

My name is Cory Buckley. I am a senior at Paris Gibson Education Center in Great Falls. I represent my fellow students in my Jobs for Montana's Graduates program. I am seventeen years old. I work at a gas station called the Valley Country Store in a little town called Vaughn about nine miles away from Great Falls. I work about 20 to 30 hours a week. Before attending Paris I went to North Toole County High school in Sunburst. Sunburst is a rural town about eight miles from the border. In Sunburst I was the definition of a troubled teenager. I have battled addiction for about seven years, almost dropped out my sophomore year, been to drug rehabilitation twice, and moved out of my parents' house when I was sixteen. Thanks to my loving and supporting grandparents though I have turned my life around for the better. They helped me see what was important in life. They showed me a way out of my former life, gave me a place to stay, taught me the value of hard work, and supported me in anything I did. They saved my life.

I enrolled in the JMG program at the start of this year. It is a requirement in my school that you take some career readiness class before you can graduate. I was taking another class called job seekers and my advisor suggested I go to a JMG seminar. After the first meeting I was hooked. It was so much more engaging than my other class that the same day I switched classes. JMG has really helped me look at life differently. The people in my class have really become like a family to me, and together we help each other make better decisions. The class has given me a perspective on what I would like to have in my job environment. Our class really works well together to accomplish our goals, work out interpersonal problems, and give people the individual drive and innovation to create new ideas and make them happen. To me this is exactly what I want when I go to work.

In my JMG chapter I am the leadership officer. My job is to teach people about leadership through actually doing activities that work on this area of life and also setting a good example by being a leader. The JMG program's goal is to work on leadership, career, social and civic responsibility in life. We have officers for all these pillars. Personally being the leadership officer has made me a strong leader in everything I do. From the classroom to life itself I have taken on the responsibilities of being a leader in every endeavor. When the opportunity arises I am the first now to say what do I need to do and how do I get people motivated for our cause. This has made me a truly better person and I have to thank my JMG chapter for the opportunity.

JMG needs funding however. In my chapter a big problem is that we have no money to accomplish everything and in today's world it takes money to do anything. We can do fundraisers and other money making ideas but in reality it is not enough. The conferences we attend every year and the competitions are very expensive. Hotel rooms, fuel for the vehicles, food it all adds up fast. I ask you today to consider funding for our program. With our hands on approach to career readiness you will see that in the coming years more and more students will want to participate in our program. If you help us now it will pay off for our state and students and Montana can say we saw the future before it happened and did our part to make it a reality.

In the coming years I will remember what I have learned in Jobs for Montana's Graduates. My goals are to be a business owner one day, raise a nice family, and make enough money to support myself. Next fall I will attend the University of Montana-Northern in Havre and will major in diesel technology and minor in small business management. When I graduate I will look for a job at a company that has a working environment like that which is back in my chapter advisor's classroom in Great Falls. I want to work for people with a mind and motivation much like my own. Throughout life I will remember the pillars that JMG has taught me. They are that we must be leaders every day. We must pick a career not a job in which we have no intention of working at for long. We must continually work on our social skills and it is our responsibility to help those who truly need someone to lift them up. All this I learned from Jobs for Montana's Graduates. Thank you.